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January 27, 2020

Chairman Jan Schakowsky
Ranking Member Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Consumer Affairs and Commerce
2125 Rayburn HOB
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

H.R. 1754

Dear Chairman Schakowsky and Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers:

I greatly appreciate the Consumer Protection and Commerce Subcommittee devoting time to hold a hearing on H.R. 1754, the "Horseracing Integrity Act of 2019" (the "Act"). My name is Vinnie Viola and I am writing you to express my strong support for passage of the Act.

As a lifelong fan of horse racing and now being in the fortunate position of owning, together with my wife Teresa, St. Elias Stables, a leading Thoroughbred racing and breeding stable, I have experienced the beauty and enjoyment of horse racing in the United States from different perspectives and have great appreciation for the important role it has played in US sporting history. I am also acutely aware of the challenges and difficulties that horse racing currently faces, which challenges and difficulties necessitate bold, aggressive and prompt action to modernize the sport and protect the equine athletes, jockeys, betting public and other stakeholders.

Like all other businesses and sports, horse racing must evolve with the times, and the time has come for it to be subject to Federal legislation to ensure, among other things, uniformity of rules on medication, drug testing and transparency to protect the integrity of the sport for its stakeholders and betting public and the safety of the equine athletes and jockeys.

The current system of regulation consists of fragmented regulatory authority with 38 racing jurisdictions adopting their own rules, which rules can be inconsistent, conflicting and incomplete. While the current system of state-by-state regulation may have been effective decades ago, it has failed to evolve and has been unable to create the uniformity and transparency needed to modernize the sport, protect its participants and keep up with rules

already in place in many other parts of the world. The Act will help address the most pressing critical issues while also leaving other matters at the state level.


With the betting public increasingly able to place bets easily across state lines and horses able to race in different states throughout the year, it is critical that a comprehensive Federal framework covering medication use, testing and penalties that applies consistently to all racing jurisdictions in the U.S. be enacted by Congress.

As a person who has spent virtually my entire professional life working in the heavily regulated financial services industry, including having served as Chairman of the New York Mercantile Exchange, I have developed a good understanding of the role and importance that Federal legislation can play in creating fair markets for participants and the public. Horse racing has reached a well-publicized crossroads that necessitates Federal legislation to govern certain fundamental aspects of this interstate business to enhance the safety and integrity of the sport and to create a fair market.

As an entrepreneur, I am also sensitive to the broader economic benefits from, and jobs that are created by, horse racing. This important legislation will also serve to strengthen the foundation of horse racing and create a platform for greater economic growth and more jobs in addition to the important and critical safety benefits that will result from its adoption.

For all of the foregoing reasons, I strongly encourage the Committee to support passage of the Act.

Sincerely,



Vincent Viola